

VZCZCXRO5670  
PP RUEHAG RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK RUEHROV  
DE RUEHDM #0541 1561148  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 051148Z JUN 07  
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3607  
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE  
RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE  
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 000541

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

NEA/ELA  
NSC FOR MARCHESE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/04/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [SY](#)  
SUBJECT: SARG BACKS AWAY FROM HOSTING IRAQI SECURITY  
WORKING GROUP MEETING

REF: BAGHDAD 1620

Classified By: CDA Michael H. Corbin for reasons 1.5 b/d

11. Summary: Diplomatic sources tell us the Syrians are not moving ahead with the border security working group, either because of unhappiness over detained Syrian soldiers, or simply because of continued Iraqi nonresponsiveness. We do not know the validity of these reports, but see no evidence the SARG/Iraq track is advancing. End Summary.

12. (C) In a June 3 meeting, Adel Ibrahim, political counselor at the Egyptian embassy in Damascus, told us that his embassy had been notified by the Syrian MFA that the SARG would not host the Iraq security issues working group meeting, which had been scheduled to occur sometime between June 5-15 in Damascus. Ibrahim said the SARG declined to specify a reason for cancelling the meeting, but in a separate meeting he was told by the Iraqi Charge d'Affaires, Hasan Sawedi Abdul al-Aziz, that MFA officials told him they were cancelling the meeting because of a lack of GOI responsiveness in the case of two Syrian soldiers who have been detained in Iraq since February 2007. Ibrahim commented that the SARG originally claimed the two went missing on the Syrian side of the border, to only later be compelled to admit they were well inside Iraq when taken into custody. Iraqi Charge Abdul Aziz reportedly complained to Ibrahim that the GOI had no information on the two Syrian soldiers, which led Aziz to speculate that Coalition forces were holding the two. Ibrahim commented to POL/ECON Chief that the security working group seemed like the ideal venue for resolving the SARG's concerns about its two detained soldiers. He expressed disappointment that the meeting wouldn't occur in Damascus but hoped the venue could simply be moved to another member country, which, he asserted, would compel the SARG to attend despite its objections.

13. (C) In a separate meeting, the Norwegian Ambassador, Hans Langva, told Charge that he had, likewise, heard that the SARG would not carry through with its commitment to host the security issues working group. Syrian Deputy FM Faisal Mikdad told Lengva that the GOI's lack of responsiveness to SARG attempts to coordinate the specifics of the meeting caused the SARG to re-think hosting the working group. Mikdad commented to Langva that the SARG could have gone forward with the meeting in spite of the GOI's lack of interest but chose not to because the meeting's success mandated the GOI's active participation.

CORBIN